

(new) 14. A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 11, wherein the riser configuration is protected by sacrificial anodes.

(new) 15. A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 11, wherein during tow-out and installation, the guide conduits (9) provide necessary buoyancy to make the riser configuration, except the base (5) and buoyancy means (6), near neutrally buoyant.

(new) 16. A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 12, wherein the material of the guide conduits (9) comprises aluminium or a similar light metal.

(new) 17. A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 12, wherein the riser configuration is protected by sacrificial anodes.

(new) 18. A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 12, wherein during tow-out and installation, the guide conduits (9) provide necessary buoyancy to make the riser configuration, except the base (5) and buoyancy means (6), near neutrally buoyant.

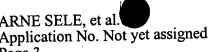
(new) 19. A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 13, wherein the riser configuration is protected by sacrificial anodes.

(new) 20. A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 13, wherein during tow-out and installation, the guide conduits (9) provide necessary buoyancy to make the riser configuration, except the base (5) and buoyancy means (6), near neutrally buoyant.

(new) 21. A method for installing a riser configuration having a submerged tower (4) comprising a plurality of riser pipes (10) substantially inserted in guide conduits (9) and also having a buoyancy tank (6) and gravity base (5) connected by said riser pipes (10) and guide conduits (9), comprising the steps of:

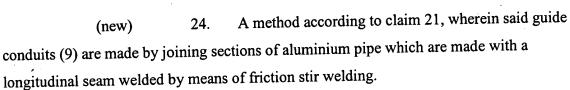
fabricating a bundle (4) of guide conduits (9) and riser pipes (10) on a roller bed or rail bed from which it can be launched,





- connecting the buoyancy tank (6) and gravity base (5) to opposite ends of said bundle,
- sealing at least a plurality of the guide conduits (9) and riser pipes (10) of the bundle (4),
- launching the resultant structure and connecting the buoyancy tank and gravity base ends of the structure to respective towing vessels (17) via towing wires (18),
- flooding the buoyancy tank (6) to provide it with substantial negative buoyancy so that both the tank (6) and the base (5) will act as clump weights,
- towing the structure (4,5,6) to the offshore location for its installation as a sub-surface tow while maintaining sufficient angle and tension in the towing wires (18) to maintain substantial tension in the pipe bundle (4),
- lowering the base (5) end of the structure (4-6) by paying out the towing wire connected to the base (5),
- permitting water to enter the spaces formed between the riser pipes (10) and their respective guide conduit (9) when the base (5) has reached a predetermined depth in order to limit the differential pressure across the wall of the guide conduits (9),
- continuing lowering the base end of the structure until the structure is perpendicular and suspended from the towing wire (18) connected to the buoyancy tank (6), and
- lowering the structure to allow the base (5) to penetrate the bottom (2) mud-line and anchoring the base to the ocean floor, and removing the water ballast and towing wire (18) from the buoyancy tank, thus providing tension in the guide conduits (9).
- A method according to claim 21, wherein a motion 22. (new) compensating system is employed in the towing wire (18) between the buoyancy tank (6) and surface vessel. (17).
- A method according to clam 21, wherein the guide 23. (new) conduits (9) are fabricated by welding together sections of aluminium pipe using friction stir welding.





(new) 25. A method according to claim 21, wherein at least some of the annular spaces between the riser pipers (10) and the corresponding guide conduits (9) are filled with a gel after expelling any water having entered said spaces during installation of the structure.

(new) 26. A method according to claim 22, wherein the guide conduits (9) are fabricated by welding together sections of aluminium pipe using friction stir welding.

(new) 27. A method according to claim 22, wherein said guide conduits (9) are made by joining sections of aluminium pipe which are made with a longitudinal seam welded by means of friction stir welding.

(new) 28. A method according to claim 22, wherein at least some of the annular spaces between the riser pipes (10) and the corresponding guide conduits (9) are filled with a gel after expelling any water having entered said spaces during installation of the structure.

(new) 29. A method according to claim 23, wherein said guide conduits (9) are made by joining sections of aluminium pipe which are made with a longitudinal seam welded by means of friction stir welding.

(new) 30. A method according to claim 23, wherein at least some of the annular spaces between the riser pipes (10) and the corresponding guide conduits (9) are filled with a gel after expelling any water having entered said spaces during installation of the structure.

